

February 1, 2015

Senator Leone, Representative Baram, Senator Witkos and Representative Carter. I appreciate being able to testify in support of HB 5349 An Act Establishing a Cheese Shop Wine and Beer Permit.

Wine and Cheese...they go together. For hundreds of years they have been a pair. This is a simple concept that would allow six small businesses in our state to sell limited amounts of wine and beer. Limited is a key word in this legislation. The cheese stores are not looking to compete with the local package stores in any way. The wines and beers would be chosen to be paired with specific cheeses. Wine distributors like this, as it would allow them to sell a different quality of product to a different consumer.

By allowing these six cheese stores to sell a limited amount of wine and beer, it helps them expand their product offering for customer convenience. It is also a key opportunity for our state to show support for our small business community.

Two things of note, one there is a very good recent Food Marketing Institute study done that emphasizes the benefit to small businesses by allowing cheese and wine to be sold together. Also, Massachusetts recently passed legislation that allows speciality cheese stores to sell limited amounts of wine and beer. This has been very successful and has not proven harmful to the local small package stores.

I look forward to working with you to further this common sense legislation for our small hard working business community.

Please let me know if you have any questions.